



## North Central Waterwatch Annual Report Card 2016-17



**North Central Waterwatch works with local volunteers so they have the knowledge and skills required to collect valuable information about the ecological health of the waterways in regional Victoria.**

The program supports community volunteers to test waterway health. The program offers a range of workshops that provide opportunities for community to participate in natural resource management and delivers an environmental education program that has been expanded across the state.

Waterwatch in its 24th year continues to grow, learn and develop with its community and is proud of the hundreds of hours of our community volunteers commitment to the environment.



*The government is supporting community partnerships over the next four years through Waterwatch and other citizen science initiatives to address local waterway priorities. These priorities are being addressed as part of the Victorian Government's \$222 million investment over the next four years to improve catchment and waterway health across regional Victoria. This investment is a key component of Water for Victoria – the government's plan for management of our water resources now and into the future.*



# Report Card 2016-17: Key Achievements

## Citizen Scientist Volunteer Monitoring Program

**52**  
citizen scientists

**6**  
new volunteers

**116**  
sites monitored

**70%**  
of monitoring sites are priority waterways

**42**  
volunteers participated in QAQC week

**90%**  
of volunteers passed their mystery sample testing

**8**  
community groups tested 36 sites during Saltwatch week

**2,496**  
estimated volunteer hours

**1**  
pilot 'citizen science' program established with the Native Fish Recovery Plan

**9**  
Agreed Level Taxonomy (ALT) waterbug workshops held

**60**  
participants accredited

**46**  
Yellow Belt Waterbug Warriors

**12**  
Orange Belt Water Bug Warriors

**1**  
Green Belt Waterbug Warriors

*"We are confident our volunteers are collecting valuable and reliable water quality information from rivers and streams across the region"*

- Cass Davis, Regional Waterwatch Coordinator.

## Community Engagement

**386**  
community members participated in community engagement events

**169**  
attended the Campaspe Carp Catch 2016 - 20 carp caught!

**43**  
community members attended the You, Me, Biodiversity information night

**18**  
community members attended the Rakali roadshow information night

**96**  
students participated in National Water Week

## River Detectives Program

**6**  
professional development training workshops

**73**  
facilitators in attendance

**88%**  
of participants said their intent to change was definite

**32**  
schools/groups engaged

**4020**  
students participated in waterbug studies, salinity studies and water science



## NatureBlitz

**187**  
reports submitted

**768**  
individuals reported



**17**  
fish



**62**  
frogs



**8**  
mammals



**599**  
waterbirds

**50**  
users

### New ability:

- More species (Reptiles, Birds, Mammals)

Data shared with Victorian Biodiversity Atlas and Atlas of Living Australia





## Case Study:

### North Central Waterwatch & Native Fish Recovery Plan, Annual River Health Snapshot Report 2016

Understanding and reporting on the condition of our waterways is important for guiding waterway management decisions and demonstrating management outcomes. North Central Waterwatch and the Native Fish Recovery Plan projects work with the local community, or citizen scientists, so they have the knowledge and skills required to collect valuable information on the ecological condition of waterways in the Native Fish Recovery Plan program area.

The report provides a baseline assessment of river health with results used to track progress against the Native Fish Recovery Plan's objectives, which are:

- restoring and maintaining key habitats (i.e. riparian vegetation)
- reducing pollutant loads (sediment and nutrients) entering waterways
- improving and maintaining water quality
- restoring and maintaining key ecosystem processes
- restoring and maintaining resilient and healthy aquatic communities (i.e. fish populations)

Citizen scientists teamed up with aquatic ecologists to undertake intensive training over five days while collecting data from 22 sites across the Gunbower and lower Loddon region. The aim of the training was to understand the use of macroinvertebrates as indicators of river health. The ALT method has been developed with citizen scientists and community groups in mind. It involves identifying invertebrates using features visible to the naked eye. Most sites did not meet ALT objectives and were considered in poor ecological condition reflecting the history of degradation at these sites. Implementation of the Native Fish Recovery Plan will work towards improving these systems although large scale improvement in ecological condition will take a great deal of time and action from the community. Commitment from community volunteers who measure change over time is a valuable and positive step towards improving river health.



*"I have always had an interest in catchment management and stream health; being involved in this program has further enhanced my enthusiasm in this area. By participating in the workshops for this project and knowing that the data we were collecting would go towards research in a significant project was rewarding and drove mine and other participant's interest"*

Kelly Button, Bendigo TAFE student.

## Partnerships:



**North Central Waterwatch works closely with the following stakeholders to achieve the best outcomes for community engagement and monitoring programs across north central Victoria and would like to say thank them for their support:**

Waterwatch Victoria, City of Greater Bendigo, Coliban Water, Goulburn Murray Water, VR Fish, Local Traditional Owner groups, Native Fish Recovery Plan, Regional Landcare, Bendigo TAFE, Shire of Campaspe, Gannawarra Shire, Bird Life Australia, Environment Protection Authority, Australian Citizen Science Association and the Victorian Citizen Science Association.

## How to get involved



Contact your local **Waterwatch Coordinator** at the **North Central Catchment Management Authority**

✉ Via post: **PO Box 18, Huntly VIC 3551**

☎ Phone: **03 5448 7124**

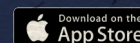
📍 Main Office: **628-634 Midland Hwy  
Huntly Victoria 3551**

✉ Email: **info@nccma.vic.gov.au**

Or follow us on:  



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The North Central Catchment Management Authority acknowledges Aboriginal Traditional Owners within the region, their rich culture and spiritual connection to Country. We also recognise and acknowledge the contribution and interest of Aboriginal people and organisations in land and natural resource management.

North Central Waterwatch is proudly funded through the Victorian Government's Victorian Water Investment Framework and receives annual financial contribution and support from Coliban Water and City of Greater Bendigo.